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H.601

Introduced by Representatives Page of Newport City, Marcotte of Coventry,
Smith of Derby, Anthony of Barre City, Bos-Lun of
Westminster, Goldman of Rockingham, Hango of Berkshire,
Higley of Lowell, Houghton of Essex, Labor of Morgan,
Lefebvre of Newark, Masland of Thetford, Morgan, L. of
Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Mrowicki of Putney, Ode of
Burlington, Rosenquist of Georgia, Seymour of Sutton, Sims of
Craftsbury, Strong of Albany, and Williams of Granby

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Conservation and development; water pollution control; lake in crisis;

Lake Memphremagog

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to declare Lake
Memphremagog a lake in crisis.

An act relating to declaring Lake Memphremagog to be a lake in crisis

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

The General Assembly finds that:

1 (1) Lake Memphremagog is of integral importance to Vermont and
2 Quebec as the lake:

3 (A) is the largest body of water in northeastern Vermont and
4 southeastern Quebec;

5 (B) provides over 175,000 people with drinking water; and

6 (C) is an important economic driver in northeastern Vermont and
7 southeastern Canada, drawing people and resources for its beautiful landscapes
8 and numerous recreational opportunities.

9 (2) Phosphorus runoff is causing or contributing to excessive algal
10 biomass in Lake Memphremagog, impairing the swimming and aesthetic uses
11 of the lake.

12 (3) Phosphorus runoff to Lake Memphremagog is contributing to the
13 more frequent cyanobacteria outbreaks in the lake, which pose threats to public
14 health and natural resources.

15 (4) Vermont must take responsibility for the impairments to Lake
16 Memphremagog as:

17 (A) more than 100 permanent or intermittent tributaries feed Lake
18 Memphremagog, with 71 percent of the watershed located in Vermont; and

19 (B) water quality models indicate that Vermont watersheds contribute
20 a significant majority of the annual phosphorus loading to the lake with

1 116,216 pounds of the total annual load of 151,314 pounds of phosphorus
2 originating in Vermont.

3 (5) Vermont has drafted and begun implementation of a Total Maximum
4 Daily Load plan to address impairment of Lake Memphremagog, and the
5 Agency of Natural Resources has committed to improving water quality in the
6 lake, but more action, attention, and funding is necessary to improve the health
7 of Lake Memphremagog as soon as possible.

8 (6) The General Assembly should declare Lake Memphremagog a lake
9 in crisis and dedicate additional time, money, and action to improve the lake's
10 water quality as soon as possible in order to avoid continued threats to the
11 natural resources, drinking water, recreation, and economic benefits provided
12 by the lake.

13 Sec. 2. DECLARATION; LAKE MEMPHREMAGOG; LAKE IN CRISIS

14 Notwithstanding 10 V.S.A. § 1310, the General Assembly declares Lake
15 Memphremagog as a lake in crisis under 10 V.S.A. chapter 47, subchapter 2A.
16 The crisis response plan for Lake Memphremagog shall include controls limits
17 on discharges of effluent to tributaries of the lake.

18 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

19 This act shall take effect on passage.